inspite of the vast development in Information Technology;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the private telephone operators and even BSNL have failed to achieve the target for providing telephone facilities in rural areas in the country; and

(d) if so, the specific steps taken by Government to take the telephone revolution to the rural areas in the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Government is making all out efforts to provide telephones in rural areas of the country. As on 30th September, 2007, the total number of rural telephone connections comes to 586.76 lakh resulting in a teledensity of 7.30 as against a teledensity target of 4 by 2010.

(c) All the Basic Private Service Operators (BPSOs), who were issued license in 1997, have migrated to Unified Access Service License (UASL) in November, 2003. According to the guidelines of UASL, there is no requirement of mandatory coverage of rural areas under the migrated UASL License.

(d) Various steps being taken to take the telephone revolution to the rural areas of the country include *inter alia*:—

(i) Laying of cable upto 5 Kms. of exchange by BSNL against the earlier standard of 2.5 Kms. Based on demand and techno-commercial consideration.

(ii) Deployment of Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) network in rural areas to meet the demand of scattered and far-flung rural areas where connection of telephone is not techno-commercially feasible on landline.

(iii) Coverage of Remote and far-flung areas, which are not possible to be covered with terrestrial technology, with Digital Satellite Phone Terminals (DSPTs).

(iv) Provision of subsidy, through Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) in the first phase for setting up and managing 7871 number of infrastructure sites (towers) in 500 districts spread over 27 States for provision of mobile services in the spcified rural and remote areas, where there is no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage.

Post offices in NER

*204. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of post offices functioning at present in the rural areas of North-Eastern Region (NER), particularly in Sikkim, district-wise;

(b) the number of villages in the States in NER where post office facility has not been provided as yet; and

(c) the details of measures taken by Government to open new post offices in such villages of NER?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) The number of post offices functioning at present in the rural areas of North Eastern Region as on 31.3.2007 is 6637 out of which 197 post offices are in Sikkim State Statement-I (*See* below) District-wise details of post offices in the North Eastern Region are given in Statement-II. (*See* below)

(b) and (c) The number of villages without post offices in the North Eastern Region as on 31.3.2007 is 34754. The details are given in Statement-III (*See* below) During the Eleventh Five Year Plant, it is proposed to open 573 Post Offices in the rural areas of North Eastern Region. As Part of this Plan, during the year 2007-08, it is proposed to open 54 Gramin Dak Sewak branch Post Offices in rural areas of North East Region. Post Offices are opened subject to fulfillment of distance, population and income norms. Norms for opening of post offices in hilly, tribal, desert and in inaccessible areas are liberalized. Subsidy is given to the entire rural network-Gramin Dak Sewak Branch Post Offices (GDSBOs) in normal rural areas are provided subsidy to the extent of 66 2/3% of the cost and those in hilly, tribal, desert and inaccessible areas are provided subsidy up to the maximum level of 85% of the cost. The Department provides facilities of daily delivery of mail to every customer, collects letters from letter boxes and sells stamps and stationery at the door steps of every customer in village. All the villages where opening of a separate Post office is not justified are provided basic postal facilities through the nearest existing Post Office/Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendra.

Statement-I

Number of post offices functioning in rural areas of north east region (NER) as on 31-3-2007

Sl. No.	Name of Circles in NER	Departmental Sub Offices	Gramin Dak Sevak Sub Offices	Gramin Dak Sevak Branch Offices	Total No. of Post Offices in Rural Areas
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Assam	382	35	3291	3708
2	North East				
	Arunachal Pradesh	31	NIL	251	282
	Manipur	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	Meghalaya	35	NIL	423	458
	Mizoram	17	3	327	347
	Nagaland	27	NIL	275	302
	Tripura	43	7	598	658
3	Sikkim (West Bengal)	10	4	183	197
	TOTAL	596	49	5992	6637

Statement-II

District wise number of Post Office functioning in Rural Areas of North East Region (NER) as on 31-3-07

Sl. No.	Name of Circles in NER	Total No. of Post Office in Rural Areas
I.	*Assam*	—
1.	Barpeta	186
2.	Bongaigaon	66
3.	Chirang	62
4.	Cachar	259
5.	Darrang	94
6.	Dhemaji	83
7.	Dhubri	141
8.	Dibrugarh	198
9.	Goalpara	105
10.	Golaghat	142
11.	Hailakandi	100
12.	Jorhat	205
13.	Kamrup	247
14.	Karbi-Anlong	129
15.	Karimganj	136
16.	Kokrajahar	98
17.	Lakhimpur	175
18.	Morigaon	96
19.	N.C. Hills	67
20.	Nagoan	242
21.	Nalbari	237
22.	Sibsagar	243
23.	Sonitpur	207
24.	Tinsukia	121
25.	Udaiguri	69
	TOTAL:	3708

1	2	3
II.	*North East*	
	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	
1.	Anjaw	9
2.	Changlang	29
3.	East Kameng	14
4.	East Siang	28
5.	Kurungkumey	10
6.	Lohit	32
7.	Lower Dibang Valley	18
8.	Lower Subansiri	14
9.	Papumpare	13
10.	Tirap	29
11.	Towang	13
12.	Upper Siang	9
13.	Upper Dibang Valley	3
14.	Upper Subansiri	13
15.	West Kameng	22
16.	West Siang	26
	TOTAL:	282
	MANIPUR	
1.	Bishanpur	46
2.	Chandel	43
3.	Churachanpur	125
4.	Imphal East	46
5.	Imphal West	116
6.	Senapati	90
7.	Tamenglong	57
8.	Thoubal	105
9.	Ukhrul	57
	TOTAL:	685
	MEGHALAYA	
1.	E. Khasi Hills	114
2.	E. Garo Hills	37

1	2	3
3.	Jaintia Hills	78
4.	Ribhoi	43
5.	S. Garo Hills	13
6.	W. Garo Hills	100
7.	W. Khasi Hills	73
	TOTAL:	458
	Mizoram	
1.	Aizwal	95
2.	Champai	55
3.	Mamit	42
4.	Kolasib	18
5.	Serchhip	21
6.	Lunglei	69
7.	Lawngrhalai	19
8.	Saiha	28
	TOTAL:	347
	NAGALAND	
1.	KOHIMA	47
2.	Mokokchong	52
3.	Mon	29
4.	Phek	33
5.	Tuensang	26
6.	Wokha	21
7.	Zunhebotha	18
8.	Dimapur	40
9.	Longleng	7
10.	Kiphire	13
11.	Peren	16
	TOTAL:	302
	TRIPURA	
1.	West Tripura	141
2.	South Tripura	222

1	2	3
3.	North Tripura	175
4.	Dholai	61
5.	Portion of West Tripura	59
	TOTAL:	658
III.	*Sikkim (West Bengal)*	
	North	21
	East	94
	West	31
	South	51
	TOTAL:	197
	GRAND TOTAL:	6637

Statement-III

Number of villages without Post Office in North East Region as on 31-3-2007

Sl. No.	Name of Circles in NER	Total No. of villages (Inhabited) without Post Office
1.	Assam	22539
2.	North East Arunachal Pradesh	3388
	Manipur	1748
	Meghalaya	5420
	Mizoram	294
	Nagaland	917
	Tripura	198
3.	Sikkim (West Bengal)	250
	TOTAL:	34754

Mobile number portability

*205. SHRI DARA SINGH:
SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state: